

a base, said base being attachable to the foundation of the structure;

a plurality of lower connecting members [attached to said base and] extending upwardly [therefrom]from said base, each of said lower connecting members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

a plurality of upwardly extending support members, each of said support members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

cont. Ci
a plurality of lower joints interconnecting said upwardly extending support members and said lower connecting members, each of said lower joints interconnecting one of said support members and one of said lower connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said lower connecting members;

wherein for each of said lower joints, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members has a reduced end portion which is inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members.

12¹⁰ 4. (Amended) [The system as recited in Claim 2, further] A system for framing at least a portion of a structure, said system comprising:

a base;

a plurality of lower connecting members attached to said base and extending upwardly therefrom, each of said lower connecting members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

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a plurality of upwardly extending support members, each of said support members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

a plurality of lower joints interconnecting said upwardly extending support members and said lower connecting members, each of said lower joints interconnecting one of said support members and one of said lower connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said lower connecting members;

wherein for each of said lower joints, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members has a reduced end portion which is inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members; wherein

each of said support members includes an upper end portion, a lower end portion and an intermediate portion;

said reduced end portion of each one of at least a portion of said lower joints comprises said lower end portion of the corresponding one of said support members, said lower end portion of said corresponding one of said support members being inserted into said interconnected one of said lower connecting members;

said system further comprising:

an upper member;

a plurality of upper connecting members attached to said upper member and extending downwardly therefrom, each of said upper connecting members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

a plurality of upper joints interconnecting said upwardly extending support members and said upper connecting members, each of said upper joints interconnecting one of said support members and one of said upper connecting members, said cross-sectional shape of each of said support members being substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said upper connecting members;

wherein for each of said upper joints, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members has a reduced end portion which is inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members.

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(Amended) [The system as recited in Claim 3, further] A system for framing at least a portion of a structure, said system comprising:

a base;

a plurality of lower connecting members attached to said base and extending upwardly therefrom, each of said lower connecting members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

a plurality of upwardly extending support members, each of said support members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

a plurality of lower joints interconnecting said upwardly extending support members and said lower connecting members, each of said lower joints interconnecting one of said support members and one of said lower connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said lower connecting members;

wherein for each of said lower joints, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members has a reduced end portion which is inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members; wherein

each of said support members includes an upper end portion, a lower end portion and an intermediate portion;

each of said lower connecting members includes a lower portion attached to said base and an upper portion extending upwardly from said lower portion;

said reduced end portion of each one of at least a portion of said lower joints comprises said upper portion of the corresponding one of said lower connecting members, said upper portion of said corresponding one of said lower connecting members being inserted into said interconnected one of said support members;

said system further comprising:

an upper member;

a plurality of upper connecting members attached to said upper member and extending downwardly therefrom, each of said upper connecting members comprising a metal tube selected from the group consisting of rectangular metal tubes and square metal tubes;

a plurality of upper joints interconnecting said upwardly extending support members and said upper connecting members, each of said upper joints interconnecting one of said support members and one of said upper connecting members, said cross-sectional shape of each of said support members being substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said upper connecting members;

wherein for each of said upper joints, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members has a reduced end portion which is

cont: 3 inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members.

Claim 29, Line 3, before "wall" delete "exterior" and after "and" delete "extending" and in place thereof insert --extendable--;

Line 6, after "base" delete "attached" and in place thereof insert -- attachable--.

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44. (Amended) A system for framing at least a portion of a structure, said system comprising:

[at least one of] a base and an upper member;

a plurality of lower connecting members [attached to] extending from said [at least one of a] base and a plurality of upper connecting members extending from said [an] upper member [and extending therefrom], each of said upper and lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

CS a plurality of [upwardly extending] support members, each of said support members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said support members being [interconnected] interconnectable at one end with one of said upper connecting members and at the other end with an aligned one of said lower connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said [interconnected] interconnectable [one] ones of said upper and lower connecting members;

wherein for each of said support members and at least one of said [interconnected one of said] interconnectable upper and lower connecting members, one of said support member and said at least one of said [interconnected one of said] interconnectable upper and lower connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to said cross-sectional shape of said support member [and said interconnected one of said connecting members], said reduced end portion being [inserted] insertable into the other of said support member and said at least one of said interconnectable [interconnected one of said] upper and lower connecting members.

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48. (Amended) [The system as recited in Claim 44, wherein] A system for framing at least a portion of a structure, said system comprising:

[said at least one of the base and an upper member comprises] an upper member;

[each of said] a plurality of upper connecting members [comprises an upper connecting member] attached to and extending downwardly from said upper member;

cont. CS
a plurality of upwardly extending support members, each of said support members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said support members being interconnected with one of said upper connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said upper connecting members;

wherein for each of said support members and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to said cross-sectional shape of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members, said reduced end portion being inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said upper connecting members.

48 50 (Amended) A system for framing at least a portion of a structure, said system comprising at least one wall frame, said at least one wall frame including:

a base having an upper surface;

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a plurality of lower connecting members [attached to said base and] extending [therefrom] upwardly from said base, each of said lower connecting members being substantially perpendicular to said upper surface of said base, each of said lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

a plurality of upwardly extending support members, each of said support members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said support members being interconnected with one of said lower connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said connecting members;

wherein for each of said support members and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to said cross-sectional shape of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members, said reduced end portion being inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said lower connecting members.

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51. (Amended) A system for framing at least a portion of a structure, said system comprising at least one wall frame, said at least one wall frame including:

at least one of a lower supporting structure and an upper member;

a plurality of connecting members [attached to] extending from said at least one of a lower supporting structure and an upper member[and extending therefrom], each of said connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

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a plurality of upwardly extending support members, said support members being substantially parallel to one another, each of said support members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said support members being interconnected with one of said connecting members, each of said support members having a cross-sectional shape which is substantially the same as a cross-sectional shape of said interconnected one of said connecting members;

wherein for each of said support members and said interconnected one of said connecting members, one of said support member and said interconnected one of said connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to said cross-sectional shape of said support member and said interconnected one of said connecting members, said reduced end portion being inserted into the other of said support member and said interconnected one of said connecting members.

Claim 53, Line 3, before "wall" delete "exterior" and after "and" delete "extending" and in place thereof insert --extendable--;

Line 5, after "base" delete "attached" and in place thereof insert --attachable--.

Claim 54, Line 3, before "wall" delete "exterior" and after "and" delete "extending" and in place thereof insert --extendable--;

Claim 57, Line 3, before "wall" delete "exterior" and after "and" delete "extending" and in place thereof insert --extendable--;

Line 5, after "base" delete "attached" and in place thereof insert --attachable--.

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(Amended) A system for forming at least one wall frame for framing at least a portion of a building structure, said [framing] system formed from a plurality of interconnectable four-sided orthogonal metal tubes having substantially identical cross-sectional dimensions that interconnect with each other at their free ends with a free end of one metal tube having a

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reduced portion along each of its four orthogonal sides relative to a free end portion of a tube to which it connects, said reduced portion snugly and securely fitting within the end portion of the tube to which it connects, wherein said orthogonal metal tubes include vertically extending support members which are substantially parallel to one another and vertically extending connecting members, wherein one of said support members and connecting members include a reduced end portion relative to the other of said supporting members and connecting members wherein the support members are supported vertically by the connecting members.

61 63. (Amended) A system for framing at least a portion of a structure having a foundation, said system comprising:

a plurality of [exterior] wall frames interconnected to one another and [extending]extendable upwardly from the foundation of the structure, wherein each of said wall frames includes:

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a plurality of interconnectable four-sided orthogonal metal tubes having substantially identical cross-sectional dimensions that interconnect with each other at their free ends with a free end of one metal tube having a reduced end portion along each of its four orthogonal sides relative to the free end portion of a tube to which it connects, said reduced end portion snugly and securely fitting within the end portion of the tube to which it connects.

62 64. (Amended) A system for framing a structure comprising:


a first base having an upper surface;

a first plurality of lower connecting members [attached to said first base and] extending upwardly [therefrom] from said base, each of said lower connecting members being substantially perpendicular to said upper surface of said first base, each of said first plurality of lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

a plurality of upwardly extending first side posts, each of said first side posts comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said first side posts being interconnected with one of said first plurality of lower connecting members;

wherein for each of said first side posts and said interconnected one of said first plurality of lower connecting members, one of said first side post and said interconnected one of said first plurality of lower connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to a cross-sectional shape of said first side post, said reduced end portion

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 being inserted into the other of said first side post and said interconnected one of said first plurality of lower connecting members

65.63 (Amended) [The system as recited in Claim 64, further comprising] A system for framing a structure comprising:

a first base;

a first plurality of lower connecting members attached to said first base and extending upwardly therefrom, each of said first plurality of lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

a plurality of upwardly extending first side posts, each of said first side posts comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said first side posts being interconnected with one of said first plurality of lower connecting members;

 wherein for each of said first side posts and said interconnected one of said first plurality of lower connecting members, one of said first side post and said interconnected one of said first plurality of lower connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to a cross-sectional shape of said first side post, said reduced end portion being inserted into the other of said first side post and said interconnected one of said first plurality of lower connecting members; said system further comprising:

a second base laterally spaced apart from said first base;

a second plurality of lower connecting members attached to said second base and extending upwardly therefrom, each of said second plurality of lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said second plurality of lower connecting members being aligned with one of said first plurality of said lower connecting members;

a plurality of upwardly extending second side posts, each of said second side post comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said second side post being interconnected with one of said second plurality of lower connecting members;

wherein for each of said second side posts and said interconnected one of said second plurality of lower connecting members, one of said second side post and said interconnected one of said second plurality of lower connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to a cross-sectional shape of said second side post, said reduced end portion being inserted into the other of said second side post and said interconnected one of said second plurality of lower connecting members.

Claim 69, line 11, after "each" insert --of--.

Please add the following new claims:

~~70~~ A system for constructing at least one wall frame for framing at least a portion of a structure having a foundation, said system comprising a plurality of interconnectable components to form the wall frame, said interconnectable components including:

at least one base, said at least one base being attachable to the foundation of the structure;

a plurality of lower connecting members extendable upwardly from said at least one base, each of said lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

a plurality of support members, each of said support members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said support members being interconnectable with one of said lower connecting members and extendable upwardly therefrom, wherein for each of said support members and said interconnectable one of said lower connecting members, one of said support member and said interconnectable one of said lower connecting members has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to a cross-sectional shape of said support member and which is insertable into the other of said support member and said interconnectable one of said lower connecting members to snugly fit within.--

~~71~~ The system as recited in claim ~~70~~, wherein:

said lower connecting members are attached to said at least one base;

said at least one base includes an upper surface and said lower connecting members are substantially perpendicular to said upper surface of said at least one base.--

~~72~~ A system for framing a structure comprising:

a plurality of bridge members, each of said bridge members including a peak and first and second rafters, said peak being interconnectable with said first and second rafters, said peak and said first and second rafters each comprising a four-sided metal tube;

wherein for each of said peaks and said interconnectable one of said first rafters, one of said peak and said interconnectable one of said first rafters has a reduced end portion of complementary shape to a cross-sectional shape of said peak and a cross-sectional shape of said first rafter, said reduced end portion being insertable into the other of said peak and said interconnectable one of said first rafters;

wherein for each of said peaks and said interconnectable one of said second rafters, one of said peak and said interconnectable one of said second rafters has a reduced end portion of complementary

shape to said cross-sectional shape of said peak and a cross-sectional shape of said second rafter, said reduced end portion being insertable into the other of said peak and said interconnectable one of said second rafters.--

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--73. A system for constructing at least one wall frame for framing at least a portion of a structure having a foundation, said system comprising a plurality of interconnectable components to form the wall frame, said interconnectable components including:

at least one base, said at least one base being attachable to the foundation of the structure;

a plurality of lower connecting members extendable upwardly from said at least one base, each of said lower connecting members comprising a four-sided metal tube;

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a plurality of support members, each of said support members comprising a four-sided metal tube, each of said support members being interconnectable with one of said lower connecting members and extendable upwardly therefrom, wherein for each of said support members and said interconnectable one of said lower connecting members, one of said support member and said interconnectable one of said lower connecting members has a reduced end portion which is insertable into the other of said support member and said interconnectable one of said lower connecting members to snugly fit within.--

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71:11
--74. The system as recited in claim 73, wherein:

said lower connecting members are attached to said at least one base;

said at least one base includes an upper surface and said lower connecting members are substantially perpendicular to said upper surface of said at least one base.--

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--75. A system for framing a structure comprising:

a plurality of bridge members, each of said bridge members including a peak and first and second rafters, said peak being interconnectable with said first and second rafters, said peak and said first and second rafters each comprising a four-sided metal tube;

wherein for each of said peaks and said interconnectable one of said first rafters, one of said peak and said interconnectable one of said first rafters has a reduced end portion which is insertable into the other of said peak and said interconnectable one of said first rafters;

wherein for each of said peaks and said interconnectable one of said second rafters, one of said peak and said interconnectable one of said second rafters has a reduced end portion which is insertable into the other of said peak and said interconnectable one of said second rafters.--

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76. A system for framing a structure comprising:
a plurality of first side posts, each of said first side posts comprising a four-sided metal tube;
a plurality of second side posts laterally spaced from said first side posts, each of said second side posts comprising a four-sided metal tube and being substantially aligned with one of said first side posts;
a plurality of bridge members, each of said bridge members being made of four-sided metal tubing, and each of said bridge members being interconnected to one of said first side posts and interconnected to an aligned one of said second side posts;
wherein for each of said first side posts and said interconnected one of said bridge members, one of said first side post and said interconnected one of said bridge members has a reduced end portion which is inserted into the other of said first side post and said interconnected one of said bridge members;
wherein for each of said second side posts and said interconnected one of said bridge members, one of said second side post and said interconnected one of said bridge members has a reduced end portion which is inserted into the other of said second side post and said interconnected one of said bridge members--

REMARKS

Claims 10 and 47 have been cancelled, and Claims 70-76 has been added, by this document. Accordingly, Claims 1-9, 11-46, and 48-76 are pending in the application. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to the claims provided herein are supported by the application as originally filed.

The present Office Action acknowledges receipt of the amendment filed September 14, 2000, with claims 44-69 being added; acknowledges receipt of Form 1449 which was filed and indicates that the references have been considered; indicates that the drawings have been approved by the Draftsperson; rejects claims 29-37, 53, 57-59 and 63 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention; rejects claims 1-3, 11-13, 22, 44-47, 49-52 and 60-64 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Rice Planters Rope Hammock; rejects claims 25-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rice and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,304,108 issued to Hamilton, et al.; states that claims 38-43, 48, 54-56 and 67-69 are allowed; indicates that claims 29, 53 and 57 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd